

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:155

ANSWERED ON:09.12.2015

Expansion of Telecom Services

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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the target for expansion and improvement of telecommunication services has been achieved during the last three years and the current year;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the action taken to address underachievement of targets, region-wise and State-wise;
- (c) whether the expansion of telecom services is slow and telecom communication/mobile network in rural and remote areas is very poor as compared to urban areas;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the funds allocated and utilised for expansion of telecom services, circle and State-wise along with the action taken by the Government for expansion and improvement of telecommunication services?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.155 FOR 9th December, 2015 REGARDING "EXPANSION OF TELECOM SERVICES".

(a) & (b) Although no year to year target has been fixed for the expansion of telecom services, the National Telecom Policy has set the objectives of increasing rural tele-density to 70 percent by 2017 and 100 percent by the year 2020 and providing 175 million broadband connection by 2017 and 600 million by 2020. The current level of rural tele-density is 48.79 and broadband subscription is 120.88 million (as on 30.09.2015).The State-wise tele-density in rural and urban areas in the country during the last three years and current year as on 30.09.2015 is at Annexure-I & II respectively.

(c) & (d) The growth in telecom services during last three years is as below:

As on Rural Tele-density Urban Tele-density Broadband subscription (in millions)

31st March, 2013 41.05 146.64 15.05

31st March, 2014 44.01 145.46 60.87

31st March, 2015 48.04 149.04 99.20

30th September, 2015 48.79 152.36 120.88

The increase in the rural tele-density has gathered momentum, but it still lags behind the urban tele-density. 5,41,939 villages out of total 5,97,608 villages in the country are already covered with mobile services. The demand of telecom services is price sensitive and is therefore dependent on the purchasing ability of the consumers along with the coverage of geographical area by mobile services.

(e) State-wise details of funds allocated and utilized for expansion of telecom services under various schemes implemented by Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) are enclosed as Annexure-III. Action taken by the Government for expansion and improvement of telecommunication services in rural and remote areas is as below:

(i) On 10.09.2014, the Government approved a proposal to implement a Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan for the North-Eastern Region (NER). The Project envisages providing mobile coverage to 8621 identified uncovered villages by installation of about 6673 mobile towers, installation of 321 mobile tower sites along National Highways and strengthening of transmission network in the NER. The estimated cost of implementation is Rs. 5336.18 crore. The Project would be funded from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).

(ii) 2199 mobile towers are being set up in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected States with a total estimated cost of Rs.3567.58 crore. 1134 mobile towers are radiating as on 30.11.2015.

(iii) 7,317 Mobile towers have been installed with the financial support from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) under the Shared Mobile Infrastructure Scheme in villages or cluster of villages having population of 2000 or more and not having mobile coverage. The infrastructure so created is capable of being shared by three service providers for provision of mobile services. The

scheme was implemented during the period from June, 2007 to November, 2013.

(iv) It is estimated that there are about 55,669 villages in the country that do not have mobile coverage. Mobile coverage to these uncovered villages will be provided in a phased manner depending on the availability of financial resources.

(v) BharatNet / National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) is planned to connect all the 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats in the country through optical fibre utilizing existing fibers of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) viz. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), RailTel and Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) (and of any desirous private operator) and laying incremental fibre wherever necessary for providing broadband connectivity to all Gram Panchayats. As on 30.11.2015, 1,03,643 km of duct and 74,994 km of optical fibre cable covering 32,049 Gram Panchayats have been laid.